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Clark Moves to Reaganize Foreign Policy

President Reagan picked up his White House telephone early last week for a long and friendly discussion of his administration's foreign policy, a call remarkable only for the fact that the man he telephoned across the continent in California was Henry A. Kissinger.

Coupled with the rise in the White House of William Patrick Clark, the renewed Reagan-Kissinger contact contains the seed of new competition for Secretary of State Alexander Haig's unquestioned policy dominance in the wake of Richard V. Allen's dismissal as National Security Council assistant.

Reagan had just finished reading Kissinger's sharp criticism of U.S. foreign policy in two New York Times articles Jan. 17 and 18. What struck him was Kissinger's warning that the "disarray of the Western alliance" and "indecision" in Washington following the Dec. 13 crackdown in Poland threatened "a decisive turning point in Western history."

Far from taking offense, Reagan wanted to know more. What Kissinger had written reflected his own growing concern. The president's concern has been the topic of intimate Oval Office strategy talks arranged for Reagan with increasing intensity by Clark, Allen's successor as the president's NSC assistant.

At work here is no planned cabal to cut down Al Haig. Haig's sensitivity to intrusion on his turf is well known in the White House, first felt there way back on Inauguration Day. Nevertheless, the substitution for Allen by Clark is a portent of utmost significance for Reagan, Haig and U.S. foreign policy. Moving slowly and conferring frequently with Kissinger and other outsiders, Clark is combining his amiable personality and iron loyalty to Reagan to push the president into the center of national security policy.

That conflicts with the fashionable view of Haig's new dominance. With Clark, his former State Department deputy, in control of machinery in the White House and non-political professionals installed at the top of his State Department, Haig's dominance is said to be complete. The contrary is closer to the truth: Clark's insistence that policy will now follow the instincts and ideological convictions of his old California friend may weaken, not strengthen, Al Haig.

Clark's move to the White House coincided with the deluge of Reaganite and neo-conservative attacks on the administration's post-Po-

land reactions. These have centered on what Kissinger (no Reaganite or neo-conservative) called "sanctions of marginal significance" against Moscow and "eagerness to continue all negotiations" with the Soviets.

Even before Kissinger wrote those words, Reagan had privately decided (with no dissent from Haig) to cancel the second day of the Haig-Andrei Gromyko Geneva talks and ignore strategic arms talks. Clark knows that Reagan has been at least one step ahead of the State Department on wanting punitive actions against Moscow. White House insiders say he is quietly pushing the president to assert his own will with greater force, well aware that if post-Poland policy follows Reagan's instincts the hue and cry from the right wing will diminish.

Clark is not alone in wanting to convert hard-line Reaganites from enemies of administration foreign policy to active allies. White House chief of staff James Baker III, closely tuned in to conservatives on Capitol Hill, had a hand in vetoing Haig's choice of Robert D. Hormats to succeed Myer Rashish, fired for unknown reasons by Haig as undersecretary of state for economic affairs. An ideological neuter, Hormats has long been on the right-wing hate list.

With the Hormats veto apparently sealed, Clark is eyeing Dr. William Schneider Jr., a tested Reaganite hard-liner and now associate director for national security in the Office of Management and Budget, for Rashish's job. Schneider's move to State's key economic policy post would give Reaganites what they have lacked since Clark's departure: the eyes and ears of a White House insider at Haig's State Department.

Without intending any affront to Haig, Clark's effort to Reaganize administration foreign policy to the point that precisely fits Reagan's convictions is transforming the NSC apparatus. In his early-morning intelligence briefings for the president, Clark brings along a varying menu: Haig one day, Secretary of Defense Caspar Weinberger the next, CIA Director William Casey on another, sometimes NSC senior staffers.

Clark is engaged in opening Reagan's eyes to a wide spectrum of opinion—all the way to Henry A. Kissinger. His purpose is to encourage Reagan's own tendencies, not subvert Haig. But in six months Al Haig may look back to the Dick Allen regime with nostalgia.

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